

**FRAGMENT OF AELFRIC'S TRANSLATION
OF AETHELWOLD'S DE CONSUETUDINE
MONACHORUM AND ITS RELATION TO
OTHER MSS. CRITICALLY EDITED FROM
THE MS. COTTON. TIB. A. III. IN THE
BRITISH MUSEUM. DISSERTATION**

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Fragment of AElfric's Translation of AEthelwold's De Consuetudine Monachorum and Its Relation to other mss. Critically edited from the ms. Cotton. Tib. A. III. in the british museum. Dissertation by Edward Breck

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EDWARD BRECK

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IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

DISSERTATION
PRESENTED TO THE
PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEIPSIK
FOR THE ACQUISITION
OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
EDWARD BRECK,
OF MASSACHUSETTS.



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CRITICAL INTRODUCTION.

The volume¹ from which our original text is taken is a somewhat indiscriminate collection of Anglo-Saxon writings by different authors, and is accordingly described by Wanley in his *Catalogus*, "Codex antiquus et optima^e notae per diversorum manus conscriptus ante Conquisitionem Angliae". A number of the MSS. contained in the Codex, and among them the text under discussion, are but fragments.

DESCRIPTION OF TEXT.

The Anglo-Saxon text of *De Consuetudine Monachorum* is written upon both sides of three sheets of vellum, small quarto size, each page except the last, containing 25 lines, making altogether 5½ pages. According to the new numbering of the Codex these are 174^a—176^b inclusive. The first sheet is slightly larger than the two others, and shows evidence of considerable exposure in its rough edges and discoloured appearance, being quite brown in hue. The other two leaves have the appearance of having been cut by rule, are light gray in colour, and are in every way better preserved.

¹ Cotton. Tib. A. III.

There are no illegible words in the whole MS., a possible exception being the word *eawfæstlice* in line 76.

The ink is dark brown, but the capital letters show traces of having been originally vermillion.

A number of words have been underlined by a later hand, probably by Sir R. Cotton, (his autograph being at the bottom of the first page,) or some other modern examiner. The underlining occurs in most cases where the syllables of a word are somewhat separated, and indicates that the syllables so underlined are to be taken together as one word; as, for instance, *nead-behefre* in line 7, and *gemetegunga* in line 25.

The MS. begins at the very top of the first page without introduction or superscription.

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE TEXT.

There are two copies of the Text extant. The first is in volume No. 552 of the Harleian Library in the British Museum, and is from the hand of one of Archbishop Parker's secretaries, as we see from Wanley's description of the volume in the Catalogus, page 307: "Codex Chartecus in Quarto minori ab Amanuensi quodam Matthæi Parkeri Archiep. Cant. exaratus;". This copy is on the whole not a very reliable one, as the scribe has allowed himself great latitude in transcribing, and has occasionally made deliberate mistakes, such as writing *afrehte* for *astrehte*; *wuman* for *wunian*; *efenlætange* for *efenlæcunge*; *wreten* for *precen*, etc. Saxon letters are used excepting the Latin *g* and *t*; the *i* is dotted; and an arbitrary punctuation is employed. The scribe writes *i* for *y*, and vice versa, and misspells numerous words. Abbreviations are usually filled out.

The second copy, more to be relied upon than the first, is found in the volume Junius 52 II of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, a codex consisting of copies from the hand of Junius, our text standing second therein.

Junius generally uses Saxon letters, excepting in Latin words where pure Latin characters are employed. He interchanges þ and ð quite indiscriminately, using either character at the beginning, end, or in the middle of a word. Y and i are also often interchanged, and there are also a few mistakes in copying to be found. Abbreviations are usually filled out, but twice he abbreviate where the text does not.

SOURCE.

RESEARCHES OF OTHERS.

Our fragmentary MS. is thus described in the Table of Contents at the beginning of Volume Tib. A. III, "Consuetudo Monachorum per Athelwardum Epum. Saxonice"; and Wanley in his Catalogus (p. 199) calls it, "Æthelwoldus de Consuetudine Monachorum. Saxonice".

Upon the blank half of the last page of our text is a note which Wanley (Cat. p. 307) says seems to be by John Joscelin, which reads as follows: "Liber de consuetudine Monachorum qui est aut idem quem Æthelwoldus Winton. Episcopus cum Coepiscopis & Abbatibus tempore Eadgari regis Anglorum collegit (de quo mentionem facit Ælfricus Abbas in Epistola ad Egneshamenses fratres) aut certe ex eodem est desumptus. J."

According to Wülcker¹, Wanley mentions three MSS.: 1. Corp. Chr. Coll. Camb. No. 265; 2. Cotton. Tib. A. III, London; 3. Codex of Sir Simon d'Ewes² (now in the Harleiana, No. 552); and 4. a copy of the Cottonian MS. by Junius (Jun. 52) at Oxford.

The reader will recognize in No. 2 our original fragment, and in Nos. 3 and 4 the copies already described.

Dietrich³, speaking like Wülcker of Ælfric's works, also mentions our original Cottonian text, and the two copies of it. He mentions, besides, the MS. No. 265 of the Corp. Chr. Coll. Cambr. Library, and is not certain as to its character, but evidently considers it to be identical with our Cottonian text, in which inference he was wrong, as will be shown.

A. Schröer is the only one who has published the Cottonian text (in the *Englische Studien*, IX B., 2. Heft). He attempts however no critical exposition of the MS., and is evidently, like

¹ Grundriss z. Geschichte d. Angels. Litteratur, III, § 558.

² I cannot say just when this MS. was added to the Harleian Library, but it was at all events not long ago.

³ Zeitschrift für die histor. Theologie, Jahrgang 1855, IV. Heft, S. 541.

his predecessors, ignorant of the existence of the MS. at the beginning of volume Tib. A. III, which furnishes the key to the whole question. This MS., the original "De Consuetudine Monachorum" of Æthelwold, I shall speak of at length below. Schröer was, however, the first to examine the Corp. Chr. Coll. Cambr. MS., and to point out that the connection between it and the Cottonian text was by no means a direct one. He says further, "Da wir von Æthelwold's genanntem werke nichts näheres wissen, können wir freilich auch über die autorschaft dieses angeblichen auszuges nichts bestimmtes sagen Es soll zwar eine ausgabe desselben durch Buckley heabsichtigt worden, doch findet sich von einer solchen weder in Oxford noch in Cambridge oder London irgend eine spur." This edition of Buckley's was never published.

RESULTS OF MY OWN RESEARCHES.

The first result was obtained by personal examination of the Cambridge MS. (C. C. C. No. 265) which showed this to be a Latin letter of Ælfric's, thirty-one pages in length, the first two of which I print at the end of this essay.

It is fully described by Ælfric himself in the introduction as an Abridgment of Æthelwold's "Liber Consuetudinum", compiled, with certain additions from Amalarius's writings, for the monks of Ensham.

As this epistle of Ælfric's is in Latin, my next step, in order to discover the connection between it and our Cottonian text (which by no means appeared on comparison of the two alone), was to discover Æthelwold's work "De Consuetudine Monachorum" the book from which Ælfric's Abridgment was compiled.

That this searched-for work could not be the Benedictine Monastic Rule published by Schröer¹ was evident from a mere examination of Ælfric's letter, the subject-matter being so different in nature and arrangement as to make this impossible.

¹ Die angels. Prosabearbeitungen der Benedictinerregel, in der Bibliothek d. angels. Prosa. Zweiter Band. 1885.

In the MS., however, which occupies the *first* place in volume Tib. A. III. of the Cottonian Library, I am convinced that I have discovered the "De Consuetudine Monachorum" of Æthelwold from which Ælfric's epistle was compiled; and the connection between Ælfric's epistle and the Anglo-Saxon MS. which forms the subject of my essay was clearly established by the discovery that the Anglo-Saxon Fragment was nothing more than a literal translation of one half of the first chapter of the newly discovered "De Consuetudine", which is a work in twelve chapters, with a preface, table of contents, and an after-note, all furnished with an interlinear Anglo-Saxon gloss in 10th century West-Saxon dialect, somewhat older than the time of Ælfric.¹

Wright² in speaking of this work, attributes it to Dunstan. He says: "Of Dunstan's theological writings, that which is best known is a modification of the Benedictine Rule, made for the English monks, and accompanied with an Anglo-Saxon interlinear version, to render it more generally useful. The Latin text of this treatise has been printed."³ He gives a specimen of the text with the Anglo-Saxon gloss from Fol. 23 of Tib. A. III. Wright gives us no reason for thinking that the MS. is by Dunstan. In all probability, knowing that Dunstan did prepare a somewhat similar work, he fixed upon this MS. as the work in question, it being in the dialect of Dunstan's time. It is open to anyone to share Wright's conclusion, but for my own part I confidently attribute the work to Æthelwold, upon the authority of Ælfric's Abridgment of it, in the preface to which he distinctly says that Æthelwold was the author; therefore those who doubt Æthelwold's authorship must also doubt that Ælfric compiled his Abridgment from this work. I can only say that although Ælfric's extract is freely done and by no means anything like a mere

¹ To prevent confusion I shall hereafter speak of this MS. as the *De Consuetudine Monachorum*, thus clearly distinguishing it from the Anglo-Saxon *Fragment* (the subject of my essay), and Ælfric's Latin *Abridgment*, or epistle, in the Corp. Chr. Coll. Camb. Library.

² *Biographia Britannica Litteraria*, p. 459.

³ I do not know this edition.